

Bethinking of Old Orleans

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Hon. Edmund L. Pitts

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"So too, the vast picture of the meaningless masses and movements of the (starry) nebulae resolves itself into a universe of spirit beings, in infinite creative relationships to one another and to man." —Canon Arthur P. Shepherd

Hon. Edmund L. Pitts familiarly known as "The Little Giant of Orleans" was born in the Town of Yates May 23, 1839. He passed his early life on a farm and received his early education in district school and the Yates Academy. He first studied law with the Hon. Sanford E. Church of Albion and later graduated from the State National Law School at Poughkeepsie. At the age of 21 in 1860 he was admitted to the bar. For 11 years thereafter he was associated with Adna Brown in the practice of law at Medina. From 1874 to 1876 he was in partnership with John W. Graves and in 1876 became associated with Henry A. Cholds. In 1888 he formed a partnership with Leon M. Sherwood and Edward Posson.

Mr. Pitts was elected to the State Assembly in 1864 and five times re-elected to that position. In 1867 he was chosen Speaker of the Assembly, being the youngest man ever thus honored. In 1868 he was a delegate to the Republican National Convention that nominated Gen. U.S. Grant for President. For five years during President Grant's administration, Mr. Pitts served as Assessor of Internal Revenue. In 1884 he was again a delegate to the National Convention which nominated James G. Blaine for President.

Edmund L. Pitts was elected to the State Senate in 1879, 1881 and 1885. During his last term he was made President Pro tem of the Senate. In 1882 he made the speech nominating Alonzo B. Cornell for Governor. He was considered one of the best platform speakers in the State and was always heard in important republican campaigns.

While in the Assembly he worked hard for municipal reform in New York City. As an attorney he was ranked high among his colleagues and as a citizen he labored for the good of his community.

In December 1862 he married Una E., daughter of James O. Stokes, Jr. of Lyndonville. They had one daughter Grace Margaret Pitts. Mr. Pitts died of apoplexy at his West Avenue home in Medina on July 11, 1898. He was a member of the Medina Masonic Lodge and a communicant of St. John's Episcopal Church.

Two beautiful mosaic tablets made of Tiffany glass adorn the interior of St. John's Church, one of an angel in memory of Grace Margaret Pitts and the other in memory of Edmund L. Pitts with the following quotation:

"The tongue of the just
is as choice silver." —Proverbs 10:20